

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The claims are 1 to 24.

Claims 1-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamashita et al. (U.S. 4,362,677) and further in view of Applicants' admissions.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

One of the important characteristics of the present invention is to use a combination of a high-molecular weight pore former and a low-molecular weight pore former in the ratio defined in claim 1. By using such combination, the present invention provides a porous EVA hollow fiber membrane having high and uniform porosity as shown on page 4, paragraphs 2-3 and Examples 7-10. These characteristics and advantages therefrom are neither taught nor suggested by the citation.

Further, according to claims 2 and 3, the rinsing of the drawn hollow fiber is conducted while the fiber is stretched. By using this step, a kind of chap is introduced in the fiber to promote formation of porous structure, which results in a hollow fiber with good properties, particularly high water flux. Please refer to the paragraph bridging pages 8 and 9 and Examples 3-6.

Furthermore, according to claims 17 and 18, the obtained hollow fiber membrane is subjected to hot water treatment while relaxing tension on the fiber. By adopting this "relaxation step", water flux and elongation of the hollow fiber membrane is improved. Please refer to the description from page 9, last line to page 11, line 12 and Examples 48-50.

The above characteristics and advantages are neither taught nor suggested by the citation.

There is nothing in Applicants' admissions which overcomes the deficiencies of the cited reference.

For the foregoing reasons, it is considered that the rejection on prior art is untenable and should be withdrawn.

An Information Disclosure Statement accompanies, citing the references on PTO-892 in the parent application.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecuting, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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